

*Town of*



# AMHERST *Massachusetts*

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August 31, 2009

To: Larry Shaffer, Town Manager  
From: Stephanie O'Keeffe, Chair  
on behalf of the Select Board  
RE: FY09 Performance Evaluation

The Select Board thanks you for another year of fine service to the Town of Amherst.

Attached you will find a composite evaluation form, pulling together results from the individual Select Board members' evaluation forms, in addition to each member's submission. The goal is to give you the feedback you need to help you do your job better: identifying areas where we feel your performance is strong, as well as those areas that we believe would benefit from more attention.

This is an inexact science, as each of us brings our own interpretation to the expectations and goals as described, as well to the definition of each rating. That kind of nuance, along with the individual comments, makes for interesting reading, but it is worth being mindful of that imprecision while doing so.

Most importantly, because the Select Board's authority is vested in the full body and not in individual members, it is the areas in which we have broad agreement that should inform and direct your work.

Thus, per each of the evaluation areas, these documents show:

## **Fiscal Management**

The Select Board gives you very high marks for budget management and development, with particular appreciation due to this year's extremely challenging circumstances.

## **Relationship with the Board**

The Select Board gives you very high marks for improving your communication with us and for keeping us well informed, at meetings and by phone calls and e-mail. It is interesting to note that "Implementation of Select Board Policy" has a majority of similar comments pointing to the ambiguity of that concept, suggesting we and you need to work together to define that better.

### **Long Range Planning**

The Select Board gives you high marks for planning for future Town needs and for your economic development plan.

### **Staff and Personnel Relations**

The Select Board's ratings for personnel management and morale issues are low. Improvement over last year is noted and appreciated, but the need for additional attention and improvement is indicated. Concerns expressed in comments by a majority include human resources effectiveness, some staff assignments, and the lack of resolution to the firefighters' contract. Appreciation is expressed in comments by a majority for your sensitivity in handling layoffs.

### **Community and Intergovernmental Relations**

The Select Board gives you very high marks for gaining community support for new initiatives, and for your work with the university and colleges, other municipalities, and the media. For the performance goal about relationships with the university and colleges, and with community groups, you earned an "outstanding" from every Select Board member.

### **FY09 Performance Goals**

The performance goals established for FY09 were incorporated into the appropriate sections of the evaluation form. (Seven of the eight goals were incorporated; the one related to creating a centralized process for recruiting and managing volunteers was inadvertently left out.) Fulfillment of five of the performance goals received high ratings:

- 96% Commendable or above for budget planning – FY09 Goal #1
- 100% Satisfactory or above, with 80% Commendable for working more closely with the Board – FY09 Goal #4
- 100% Satisfactory or above, with 80% Commendable or above for creating an economic development plan – FY09 Goal #5
- 100% Outstanding for strengthening relationships with the university and colleges, and engaging community groups – FY09 Goal #2
- 80% Satisfactory or above for collecting feedback and suggestions from the public – FY09 Goal #7

Fulfillment of the two goals related to staff issues received low ratings:

- 50% Satisfactory or above and 50% Needs Improvement for improving employee morale – FY09 Goal #3
- 50% Satisfactory and 50% Needs Improvement for collecting staff input – FY09 Goal #6

While 50% is not a majority, it is instructive that these ratings skew much lower than those of the other goals. If Satisfactory is considered the lowest acceptable rating, then the fact that 80% of the morale goal and 100% of the staff input goal rate as Satisfactory or below indicates concern.

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Overall, this evaluation demonstrates clearly that the Select Board has high regard and admiration for your management of the Town. We hope you will continue to perform at such high levels in each of these strong areas, and we look forward to improvement in the one area where that need is indicated.

Thank you for all your good work for our community.